



NEWS RELEASE

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UCLA Chemistry Professor Accepts Responsibility in Fatal Lab Fire

A UCLA chemistry professor today accepted responsibility for laboratory conditions that resulted in a 2008 fire that killed 23-year-old research associate "Sheri" Sangji, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Professor Patrick Harran, 44, acknowledged that he was Sangji's direct supervisor on Dec. 29, 2008. On that date, Sangji was conducting an experiment when an air-sensitive chemical burst into flames, severely burning her over nearly half of her body. Sangji, who was not wearing a protective lab coat, died 18 days later.

Addressing the court, Harran said he was "ultimately responsible for the safety of personnel in my laboratory."

Under the terms of a settlement announced today, Harran is required to develop and teach an organic chemistry course to help inner city high school graduates prepare for college level organic chemistry. Harran must teach the seven-week summer course for five years.

In addition, he is required to complete 800 hours of non-teaching community service at UCLA Hospital or UCLA Health Services and to pay a \$10,000 fine.

The criminal charges will remain pending for five years while Harran completes all the conditions of the settlement agreement. The four felony counts include willful violation of state Labor Codes to establish, implement and maintain an effective injury and illness prevention program and failure to require body protection for employees exposed to hazardous substances.

Deputy District Attorneys Craig Hum and Marguerite Rizzo are prosecuting the case.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.